

THE PROGRESS OF THE KAREN RACE

307

treated elsewhere in this volume will be briefly discussed in the following paragraphs. 177

The cessation of open hostilities between the Karen and the Burmese has largely mitigated the old animosity existing between them. Where members of the two races live in close proximity, however, some friction is still produced. Nevertheless, the Karen's dislike of their neighbors is not so great as to prevent many of those living on the plains from adopting Burmese ways and speech. They do this not out of admiration for things Burmese, but because of the prevalence of Burmese culture and in order to avoid the appearance of rusticity that marks those who fail to conform. Some not only wear the dress of the Burmese and speak their language—always with more or less of an accent—but also, except the Christians, go to the pagodas and participate in Burmese feasts. A number of wealthy Karens, who have moved into the larger Burmese towns along the railway line and live there in Burmese style, have to all appearances lost their racial identity. In many cases those who have copied the manners of their neighbors, experience a decided weakening of their old religious faith and its moral restraints, being led into evil ways by Burmans of the less respectable classes, with whom they fraternize. 607
563

The first experiment of the British in the administration of justice among the Karen, was not successful. It consisted in appointing certain influential Karen chiefs to serve as magistrates for their people. This plan was unsatisfactory because some of the appointees were reluctant to assume authority, and also because the different tribes were much intermingled. It was, therefore, decided to try the cases of Karens, like those of the members of the other races, in the ordinary courts. While this method is correct in principle and an improvement in practice, it has not always been administered by representatives of the English nation or in the spirit of British justice. A closer supervision of the courts is needed to curb the prejudices sometimes manifested by the local magistrates. 177
092 ●

The progress of the Karen in education has been very marked. Their "Lost Book" having been restored to them by their "white brother" in the person of the Christian missionary, they have been most eager to learn to read it. This has been true from the early years of missionary activity. Before the British had established orderly government in Burma, one American missionary had pupils in her school in Moulmein almost every year who came over two 177
871